In the Claims:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 9, wherein the first dielectric material comprises an organic material, and wherein the second dielectric material comprises an inorganic material.

3. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 9, wherein the first dielectric material comprises an inorganic material, and wherein the second dielectric material comprises an organic material.

4. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 9, wherein the plurality of first apertures define vias, and wherein the plurality of second apertures define conductive lines.

5. (Original) The semiconductor device according to Claim 4, wherein the vias have sidewalls, wherein the sidewalls of the vias are substantially vertical.

6. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 9, wherein the second dielectric material comprises SiLK$^{TM}$ or porous-SiLK$^{TM}$, and the first dielectric material comprises undoped silicate glass (USG), fluorinated silicon glass (FSG), fluorinated tetraethoxysilate (FTEOS), SiCOH, or porous-SiCOH.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A-semiconductor device, comprising:

a first insulating layer, the first insulating layer comprising a first dielectric material, having first etch characteristics, and a second dielectric material formed over the first dielectric material, the second dielectric material comprising a different material than the first dielectric material, and having second etch characteristics that are different from said first etch characteristics;

a plurality of first apertures, for receiving a conductive material, defined in the first dielectric material, the first apertures comprising a first pattern, and wherein the coefficient of thermal expansion (CTE) of said conductive material is substantially similar to the CTE of said first dielectric material;

a plurality of second apertures, for receiving said conductive material, defined in the second dielectric material, the plurality of second apertures comprising a second pattern and contiguous with said plurality of first apertures, the second pattern being different from the first pattern; and

a hard mask disposed over the second dieletric material, wherein the hard mask comprises two or more layers.

10. (Original) The semiconductor device according to Claim 9, wherein the hard mask comprises a layer of $SiC_x$, $SiC_xN_y$, $SiC_xH_y$, $SiC_xN_yH_z$, or SiCOH disposed over the second dielectric material, a layer of $Si_xN_y$ or $SiO_2$ disposed over the layer of $SiC_x$, $SiC_xN_y$, $SiC_xH_y$, $SiC_xN_yH_z$, or SiCOH, and a layer of refractory metal nitride disposed over the layer of $Si_xN_y$ or $SiO_2$.

11. (Original) The semiconductor device according to Claim 10, wherein the layer of $SiC_x$, $SiC_xN_y$, $SiC_xH_y$, $SiC_xN_yH_z$, or SiCOH comprises a first layer of $SiC_x$ and a second layer of N-$SiC_x$ disposed over the first layer of $SiC_x$.

12. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor device, comprising:

a first insulating layer, wherein the first insulating layer is disposed over a plurality of conductive lines in a second insulating layer, the first insulating layer comprising a first dielectric material, having first etch characteristics and a second dielectric material formed over the first dielectric material, the second dielectric material comprising a different material than the first dielectric material, and having second etch characteristics that are different from said first etch characteristics;

a plurality of first apertures, for receiving a conductive material, defined in the first dielectric material, the first plurality of apertures comprising a first pattern and wherein the coefficient of thermal expansions (CTE) of said conductive material is substantially similar to the CTE of said first dielectric material; and

a plurality of second apertures, for receiving said conductive material, defined in the second dielectric material, the plurality of second apertures comprising a second pattern and contiguous with said plurality of first apertures, the second pattern being different from the first pattern.

13. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor device according to Claim 12, wherein the conductive material comprises copper~~, and wherein the first dielectric layer comprises a material having a coefficient of thermal expansion (CTE) close to the CTE of copper~~.

14. (Original) The semiconductor device according to Claim 13, further comprising a cap layer disposed over the second insulating layer.

15. (Original) The semiconductor device according to Claim 15, wherein the cap layer comprises $Si_xN_y$, N-$SiC_x$, $SiC_x$, $SiC_xH_y$, $SiCOH_x$, $SiC_xN_yH_z$, $SiN_xH_y$, or combinations thereof.

16. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 14, further comprising an adhesion film disposed over a top surface of the cap layer.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 24, wherein the first dielectric material comprises an organic material, and wherein the second dielectric material comprises an inorganic material.

19. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 24, wherein the first dielectric material comprises an inorganic material, and wherein the second dielectric material comprises an organic material.

20. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 24, wherein the vias have sidewalls, and wherein said sidewalls of the vias are substantially vertical.

21.-23 (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor device, comprising:

a workpiece;

a first insulating layer disposed over the workpiece;

a plurality of first conductive lines formed in the first insulating layer;

a second insulating layer formed over the first conductive lines and the first insulating layer, the second insulating layer comprising a first dielectric material, having first etch characteristics, and a second dielectric material formed over the first dielectric material, the second dielectric material comprising a different material than the first dielectric material, and having second etch characteristics that are different than said first etch characteristics;

a plurality of vias, for receiving a conductive material, defined in the first dielectric material;

a plurality of apertures, for receiving said conductive material to form second conductive lines, defined in the second dielectric material, said plurality of apertures contiguous with said plurality of vias; and a hard mask disposed over the second dielectric material, wherein the hard mask comprises two or more layers.

25. (Original) The semiconductor device according to Claim 24, wherein the hard mask comprises a layer of $SiC_x$, $SiC_xN_y$, $SiC_xH_y$, $SiC_xN_yH_z$, or SiCOH disposed over the second dielectric material, a layer of $Si_xN_y$ or $SiO_2$ disposed over the layer of $SiC_x$, $SiC_xN_y$, $SiC_xH_y$, $SiC_xN_yH_z$, or SiCOH and a layer of refractory metal nitride disposed over the layer of $Si_xN_y$ or $SiO_2$.

26. (Original) The semiconductor device according to Claim 25, wherein the layer of $SiC_x$, $SiC_xN_y$, $SiC_xH_y$, $SiC_xN_yH_z$, or SiCOH comprises a first layer of $SiC_x$ and a second layer of N-$SiC_x$ disposed over the first layer of $SiC_x$.

27. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 24, wherein the first conductive lines comprise copper, wherein the first dielectric layer comprises a material having a coefficient of thermal expansion (CTE) close to the CTE of the first conductive lines.

28. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 24, further comprising a cap layer disposed over the first insulating layer.

29. (Original) The semiconductor device according to Claim 28, wherein the cap layer comprises $Si_xN_y$, N-$SiC_x$, $SiC_x$, $SiC_xH_y$, $SiCOH_x$, $SiC_xN_yH_z$, $SiN_xH_y$, or combinations thereof.

30. (Original) The semiconductor device according to Claim 28, further comprising an adhesion film disposed over a top surface of the cap layer.

31. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 24, further comprising an adhesion film disposed over a top surface of the first dielectric layer.

32. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor device according to Claim 24, wherein the second dielectric material comprises SiLK$^{\text{TM}}$ or porous-SiLK$^{\text{TM}}$, and the first dielectric material comprises undoped silicate glass (USG), fluorinated silicon glass (FSG), fluorinated tetraethoxysilate (FTEOS), SiCOH, or porous-SiCOH.

33. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor device, comprising:

a first insulating layer, the first insulating layer comprising a first dielectric material[[,]] having first etch characteristics, an adhesion layer in contact with and covering said first dielectric material, and a second dielectric material formed over and in contact with the adhesion layer, the second dielectric material comprising a different material than the first dielectric material, and having second etch characteristics that are different from said first etch characteristics;

a plurality of first apertures, for receiving a conductive material, defined in the first dielectric material, the first apertures comprising a first pattern;

a plurality of second apertures, for receiving said conductive material, defined in the second dielectric material, the plurality of second apertures comprising a second pattern and contiguous with said plurality of first apertures, the second pattern being different from the first pattern;

a hard mask disposed over the second dielectric material, wherein the hard mask comprises two or more layers.